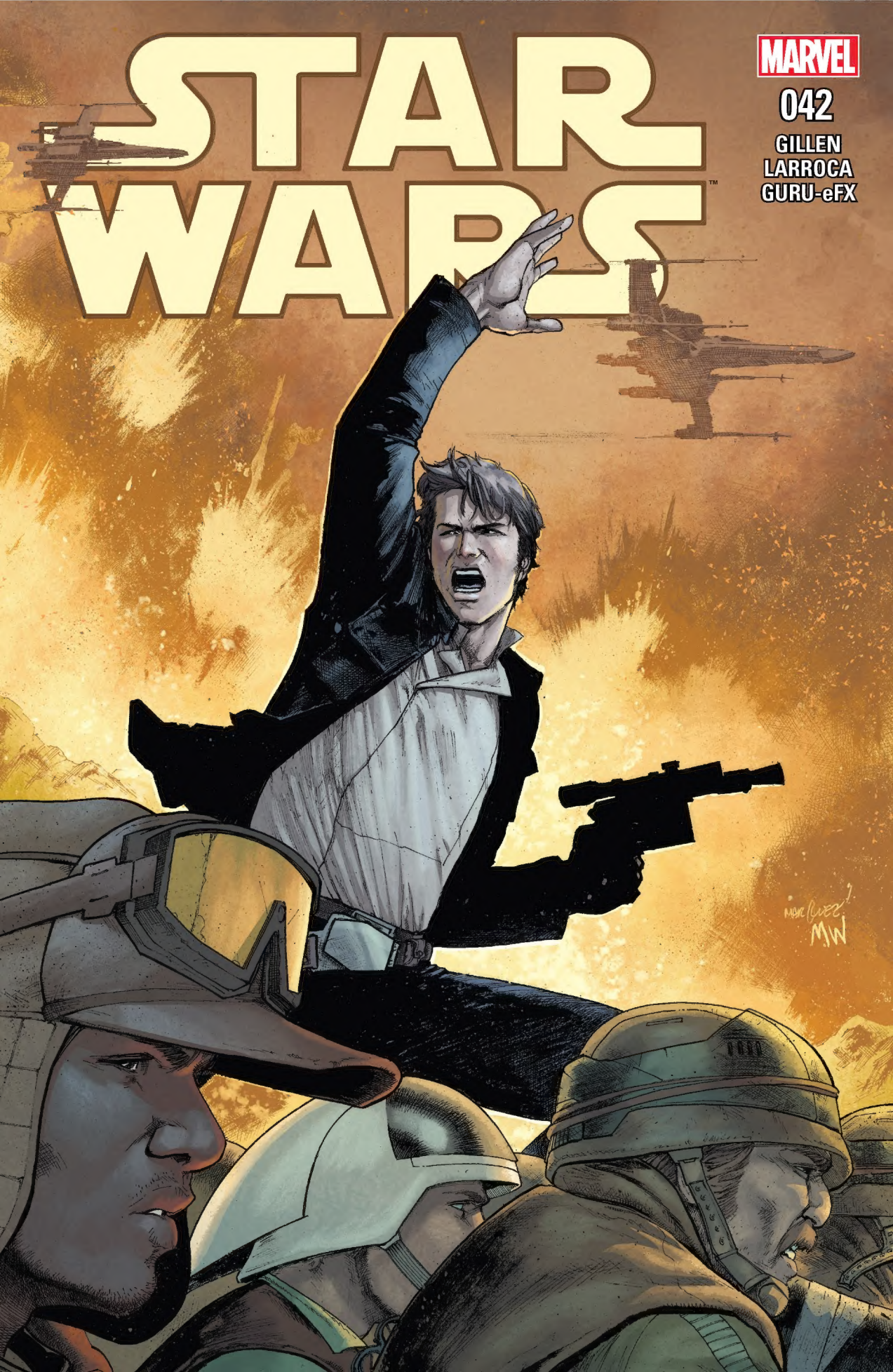
STAR WARS
MARVEL
042
GILLEN
LARROCA
GURU-eFX

Part V

THE ASHES OF JEDHA

It is a period of high tension in the galaxy. The Galactic Empire has sent Queen Trios of Shu-Torun to Jedha in an attempt to collect the remaining weapon-powering kyber crystals that survived the Death Star's attack.

Recently, rebel leaders Princess Leia and Luke Skywalker, as well as smuggler Han Solo, have joined forces with Partisans Benthic and ex-rebel fighter Ubin. Together, the group has taken up the task of destroying the Empire's orbital drill threatening to endanger the lives and homes of the struggling civilians.

Meanwhile, Chewbacca has just returned from his secret mission for the Rebellion. The information he has found will be of great assistance, but it may have come with a great cost....

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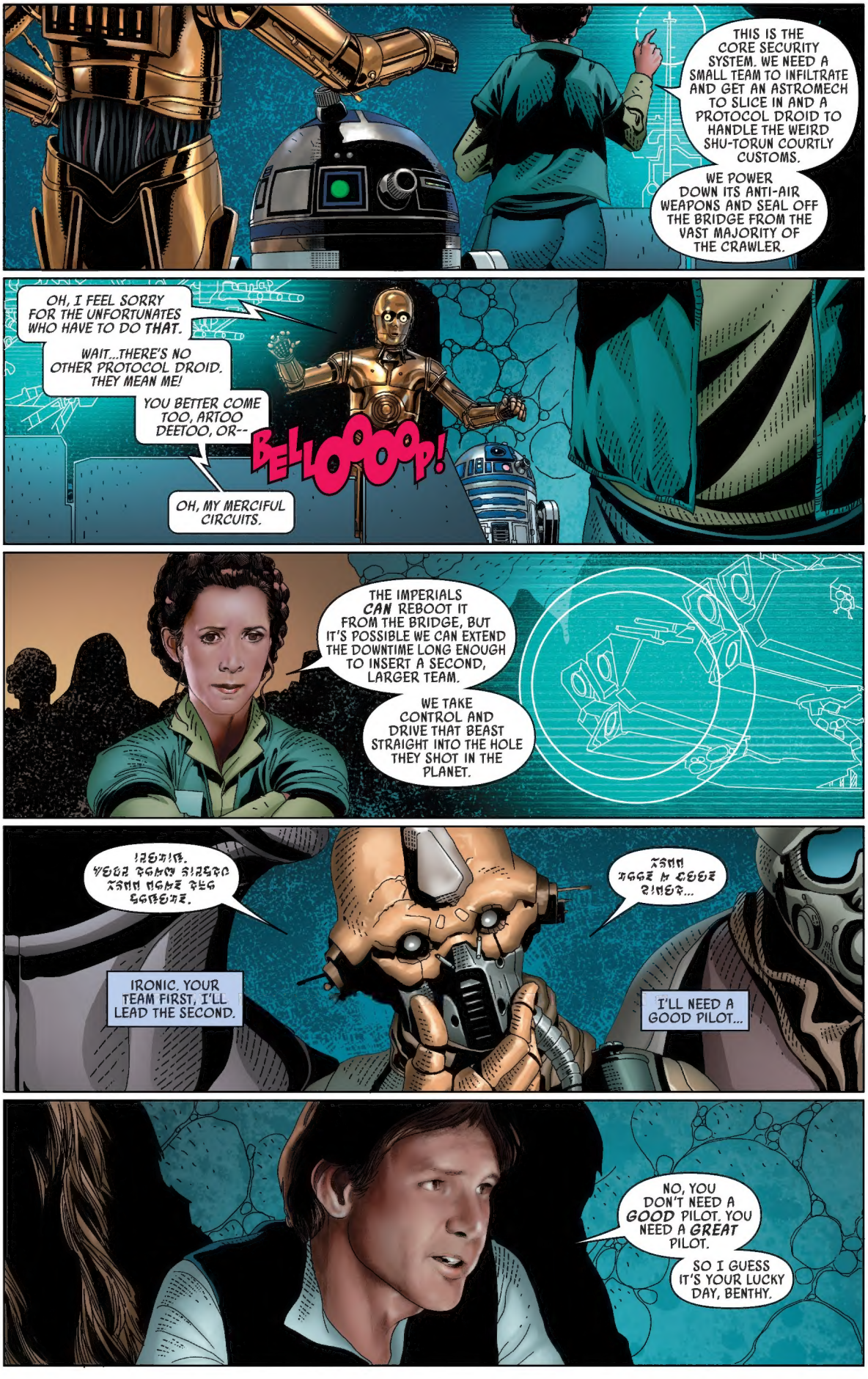
Jedha.
THE PROBLEM.
THE LEVIATHAN IS ARMED LIKE A FORTRESS AND HAS THE POPULATION OF A SMALL CITY. WE'D NEED THE POWER OF A STAR DESTROYER TO EVEN DENT IT.
THANKFULLY, WE HAVE THE PLANS.
GRRRGGGGGHHHHH.
YES. AND I'M SURE LEIA IS VERY GRATEFUL, CHEWIE.
REST UP, YOU BALL OF FLUFF. YOU'RE HURTING.


THIS IS THE CORE SECURITY SYSTEM. WE NEED A SMALL TEAM TO INFILTRATE AND GET AN ASTROMECH TO SLICE IN AND A PROTOCOL DROID TO HANDLE THE WEIRD SHU-TORUN COURTLY CUSTOMS.
WE POWER DOWN ITS ANTI-AIR WEAPONS AND SEAL OFF THE BRIDGE FROM THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE CRAWLER.
OH, I FEEL SORRY FOR THE UNFORTUNATES WHO HAVE TO DO THAT.
WAIT...THERE'S NO OTHER PROTOCOL DROID. THEY MEAN ME!
YOU BETTER COME TOO, ARTOO DEETOO, OR--
BEEEEEEEP!
OH, MY MERCIFUL CIRCUITS.
THE IMPERIALS CAN REBOOT IT FROM THE BRIDGE, BUT IT'S POSSIBLE WE CAN EXTEND THE DOWNTIME LONG ENOUGH TO INSERT A SECOND, LARGER TEAM.
WE TAKE CONTROL AND DRIVE THAT BEAST STRAIGHT INTO THE HOLE THEY SHOT IN THE PLANET.
IRONIC. YOUR TEAM FIRST, I'LL LEAD THE SECOND.
I'LL NEED A GOOD PILOT...
NO, YOU DON'T NEED A GOOD PILOT. YOU NEED A GREAT PILOT.
SO I GUESS IT'S YOUR LUCKY DAY, BENTHY.

THANKS FOR THE BACKUP, HAN.
HEY, I PREFER FLYING THE FALCON TO SNEAKING AROUND ANYWAY.
AND IT'S BETTER US GROWN-UPS SPLIT UP. YOU CAN LOOK AFTER OUR CRAZY KID...
...AND I'LL KEEP AN EYE ON THE LOCAL VERSION.
I'M SORRY. CHULCO...WAS A GOOD MAN, LUKE.
HE WAS... BUT IT'S EASY TO STOP BEING A GOOD MAN, UBIN.
THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS. WE LOSE TRACK OF OURSELVES, WHAT MATTERS...
I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT JYN AND THE REST OF ROGUE ONE.
HOW MANY THINGS WENT WRONG FOR THEM?
AND ROGUE ONE TOOK WHATEVER STEPS THEY NEEDED. PEOPLE MAKING DISTRACTIONS, SACRIFICING THEMSELVES, AMPING UP THE SIGNAL. ALL IMPROVISED. THIS CHAIN OF SACRIFICE...
...ALL LEADING TO ME TAKING THAT SHOT.
I'M GLAD I DIDN'T KNOW. I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT I'D HAVE DONE WITH ALL THAT EXTRA PRESSURE.
I MEAN...I EVEN TURNED OFF THE TARGETING COMPUTER.
YOU DID WHAT?!

YEAH. SCARIEST THING I EVER DID. I JUST KNEW IT WAS THE RIGHT THING TO DO.
IF I HAD REALLY UNDERSTOOD HOW MANY PEOPLE HAD DIED TO PUT ME IN THAT PLACE, WOULD I HAVE DONE IT?
YOU'D HAVE DONE IT. YOU'RE A HERO. IT'S WHAT YOU DO.
YOU NEED TO UNDERSTAND--ALL THOSE PEOPLE WHO DIED TO PUT YOU IN THE PLACE TO HAVE THE SHOT? THEY HAD NO IDEA YOU WERE GOING TO BE THERE. THEY JUST *HOPED* YOU WOULD.
THEY TRUSTED SOMEONE TO FINISH IT AFTER THEY WERE GONE.
SHE'S RIGHT, LUKE.
THAT'S WHAT HEROISM IS, I THINK. I...I ALWAYS THINK OF VADER AS HE BOARDED THE *PROFUNDITY*.
THE MARINES FACED OFF AGAINST HIM IN THE DARK, SLOWED HIM DOWN WITH THEIR BODIES. THEY COULD HAVE JUST RAN...
WHEN WE'RE IN THE DARK, WE CAN'T FLINCH.
BECAUSE ONE FLINCH CAN CHANGE EVERYTHING.
IF ONE PERSON FLINCHED, THE DEATH STAR WOULD STILL BE HERE.

The Leviathan.

I DIDN'T THINK THIS WOULD WORK.
THE SHU-TORUN SPECIALIZE IN WORKING IN DANGEROUS CONDITIONS. THEY USE A LOT OF DROIDS. IF YOU HAVE THE CODES TO GET ABOARD A CARRIER, YOU CAN ALWAYS COME IN WITH THE CARGO.
THAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH OVER-RELIANCE ON DROIDS.
EXCUSE ME, MISTRESS LEIA!
NOT YOU GUYS, THREEPIO! I...
IS THIS WHAT CREEPING ABOARD THE DEATH STAR WAS LIKE?
NO, IT'S DIFFERENT.
THEN, THERE WAS A REALLY RUDE PRINCESS WHO DISCOVERED THE WORST-SMELLING ROOM IN THE GALAXY.
OH, PLEASE, DON'T REMIND US OF THAT, MASTER LUKE.
THAT WAS SO DISTRESSING...

The Leviathan's Bridge.
SIR...
GIVE ME GOOD NEWS.
SAY "YES, COMMANDER KANCHAN, AFTER WE MANAGED TO TRAIL THAT BLOCKADE-BREAKING CRUISER ENOUGH TO GET THE VAGUE LOCATION, THE QUEEN'S SEISMIC RESONATORS MANAGED TO FIND THE GLORIFIED HOLE IN THE GROUND THE PARTISANS CALL A BASE."
TELL ME IT WORKED.
IT... WORKED. SIR.
THERE YOU GO, IT'S NOT THAT HARD!
WHAT ARE THE PARTISANS UP TO?
THEY SEEM TO BE PREPARING FOR SOME KIND OF RAID...
A RAID. HMM. WHY, THAT SOUNDS LIKE AN EXCELLENT IDEA! READY THE ASSAULT DRILLS!
WHAT DO YOU THINK, TRIOS?
WELL, "KILL THEM ALL" ALWAYS HAS A CERTAIN RING TO IT.

NO, YOU CAN'T COME. YOU'RE INJURED, PARTNER. YOU NEED TO--
WAIT... SOMETHING'S WRONG.
TAKE COVER!
IMPERIALS!
GGGRRRH.
YEAH, I SAID YOU'RE STAYING. NOW YOU'RE COMING.
THIS IS A BAD TIME TO SAY I TOLD YOU SO.

BENTHIC!
DON'T JUST STAND THERE GAWKING!
GRAB HIM! EVERYONE ABOARD THE FALCON! NOW!
SOONER THAN NOW!
I AM NOT IN THE MOOD TO DIE TODAY.

THE CONTROL NEXUS. SO...
YOU CAN HANDLE IT FROM HERE.
I BETTER GET TO THE BRIDGE...
I...WANT TO COME. YOU'RE DOING SOMETHING NIGHTMARISHLY DANGEROUS.
YEAH, BUT YOU ARE, TOO. YOU NEED TO STAY HERE AND GUARD THE DROIDS. AND YOU NEED TO LIVE. YOU'RE MORE IMPORTANT TO THE REBELLION THAN I AM.
WE NEED TO BE PRACTICAL.
DON'T SAY THAT. I MEAN... EARLIER, I WAS ANGRY AND FRUSTRATED.
NO, I GET IT. I THINK WE WERE BOTH RIGHT...BUT RIGHT NOW?
YOU'RE MORE RIGHT.
IT'S TIME TO DO THE SENSIBLE THING AND TAKE CONTROL OF A CITY-SIZED CRAWLER AND DRIVE IT INTO A HOLE A MOON-SIZED BASE BLEW IN THE PLANET'S MANTLE.
YOU'RE ONE IN A BILLION, LUKE.
BE CAREFUL.

WELL, HE'S ALIVE...
...BUT HE'D BE BREATHING THROUGH A TUBE IF HE WEREN'T ALREADY.
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?
I'LL LEAD THE MISSION.
AND WE GET WHAT REVENGE WE CAN.
CHEWIE, SHE'S BRAVE AS HELL, BUT SHE'S GOING TO GET EVERYONE KILLED.
DON'T TELL THE PRINCESS, BUT I WISH SHE WERE HERE.
SOMEONE NEEDS TO STOP THESE BLASTER-HAPPY IDIOTS FROM BLASTING THEIR OWN FEET.
GCRGRGGHHH.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!
GGRRRRHHHH!
I'VE GOT NO EXPERIENCE BEING A DAMN LEADER!
YOU'RE DELIRIOUS. I JUST FLY THE SHIP AND COLLECT THE CREDITS.
GHRRGGGHH.
NO, YOU FLUFFBUCKET!
WE'RE PARTNERS.
HRHHHH.
GRRRRHHHHH.
OH.

...AND IF THE WORST COMES TO THE WORST, WE'VE GOT THE FINAL SANCTION TO--
NO.
THAT IS NOT HOW WE'RE DOING THIS.
UBIN, I'M SORRY, BUT YOU'VE MADE TOO MANY BAD CALLS IN THE LAST WEEK.
FOLLOW ME, AND THE IMPERIALS WILL PAY...AND WE MAY EVEN GET OUT OF HERE TO TELL TALL STORIES ABOUT IT AFTERWARDS.
YOU'RE JUST THE PILOT.
NO.
I'M THE CAPTAIN.

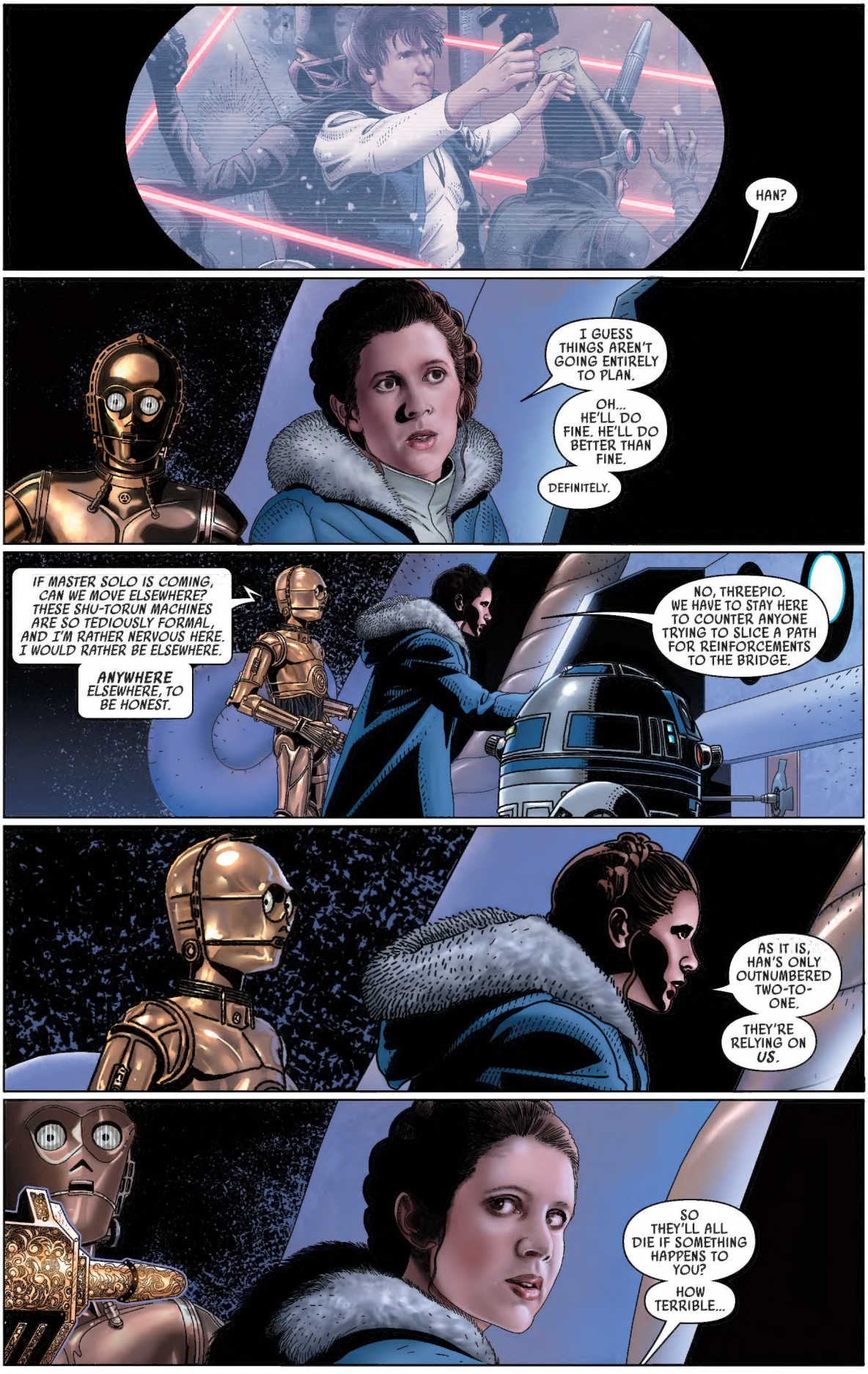
GGGRRRRH?
YEAH, THEY BOUGHT IT. THEY'RE GOING TO FOLLOW ME.
I WISH THEY WOULDN'T. I WISH THERE WERE A BETTER CHOICE, BUT...
...I'M GUESS I REALLY AM THE DAMN CAPTAIN.
GGRGRGGGHHH.
I FORGOT HOW INJURIES MADE YOU SENTIMENTAL, YOU FUZZY RUG.
DON'T DO THAT!
LET'S SAVE IT FOR THAT DRINK AFTERWARDS. I'LL LOOK FORWARD TO LEADING EVERYONE INTO THE NEAREST BAR.

COMMANDER KANCHAN!
THE REBEL CRUISER THAT ESCAPED THE RAID IS APPROACHING, AT SPEED.
EXCELLENT. THAT SAVES US THE TROUBLE OF HUNTING THEM DOWN.
BLOW THEM FROM THE SKY.
SIR... THE GUNS HAVE BEEN POWERED DOWN.
WE'LL HAVE TO REBOOT THEM.
WELL, GUESS WHAT MY NEXT ORDER IS, YOU HORRIBLE LITTLE MAN!
YES, SIR, I'LL--
I'M SORRY.

YOU CAN'T SHOOT MY FRIENDS.
PUT YOUR WEAPONS DOWN. NOW.
AH, EXCELLENT. THERE'S A VERITABLE SPREE OF GENEROSITY AMONG THE REBELS.
I DON'T HAVE TO HUNT YOU DOWN, EITHER.

THE GUNS... AREN'T FIRING. WE MADE IT.
I TOLD YOU. LUKE AND LEIA PULL IT OFF AGAIN.
THEY ALWAYS PULL IT OFF.
GGGRGRHHH.
YEAH, BUT THEY DON'T NEED TO KNOW THAT.
GGDGGGGGGDFHHH.
DON'T BE SMUG. I KNOW, I KNOW.
KNOWING WHEN TO EDIT THE TRUTH?
"SOUNDS LIKE LEADERSHIP TO ME, TOO."

"RIGHT, STEP ONE..."
...SHOOT ANYONE WHO POINTS A BLASTER ANYWHERE NEAR YOU!
AND TRY NOT TO DIE!


HAN?
I GUESS THINGS AREN'T GOING ENTIRELY TO PLAN.
OH... HE'LL DO FINE. HE'LL DO BETTER THAN FINE.
DEFINITELY.
IF MASTER SOLO IS COMING, CAN WE MOVE ELSEWHERE? THESE SHU-TORUN MACHINES ARE SO TEDIOUSLY FORMAL, AND I'M RATHER NERVOUS HERE. I WOULD RATHER BE ELSEWHERE.
ANYWHERE ELSEWHERE, TO BE HONEST.
NO, THREEPIO. WE HAVE TO STAY HERE TO COUNTER ANYONE TRYING TO SLICE A PATH FOR REINFORCEMENTS TO THE BRIDGE.
AS IT IS, HAN'S ONLY OUTNUMBERED TWO-TO-ONE.
THEY'RE RELYING ON US.
SO THEY'LL ALL DIE IF SOMETHING HAPPENS TO YOU?
HOW TERRIBLE...

...I KNOW HOW DIFFICULT IT IS TO FIND GOOD STAFF.

STAR WARS™
NEXT ISSUE:

Tour
THE SEVEN SEAS
With
BLACK MANTA
EMPIRE
Call 555-FISH